

Step Up and Step Out...Make a Difference for Our Children with Healthy Eating and Physical Activity



Step Up and Step Out is an implementation guide developed as part of the Kansas LEAN School Health Project. It is a collection of suggestions intended to assist school and community leaders in developing effective partnerships to promote and support the development of healthy behaviors in children.

School administrators and community leaders are recognizing the need for developing coordinated school health initiatives. Howell Wechsler, EdD, MPH, Health Scientist at the Division of Adolescent and School Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) summarizes the need for such collaboration as follows:

“Promoting healthy behaviors among students is an important part of the fundamental mission of schools to provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to become healthy and productive adults. Education and health professionals increasingly recognize that many children and adolescents have serious health risks that may keep them from attaining their highest potential in school and society. Every day, nearly 3000 young people take up smoking. The rate of young people who are seriously overweight has doubled since 1980. Daily participation in high school physical education classes dropped from 42% in 1991 to 27% in 1997. Over 80% of children and adolescents do not eat the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables, and two-thirds of young people eat more than the recommended amount of saturated fat. Although these risks are present, schools throughout the nation have great opportunities to encourage healthy lifestyles in their 50 million students. Collaboration and teamwork are vital to the success of a school’s effort to promote physical activity and healthy eating through a coordinated school health model. Implementing a health education curriculum is only part of the solution. Schools need to address the whole school environment including their nutrition services, student health services, physical education programs, administrative policies, student counseling, psychological and social services, staff health promotion services, and family and community involvement.”

Step Up and Step Out outlines an approach for school and community leaders to foster support for healthy children. Recognizing that every community has a unique set of circumstances, the lessons learned from 12 Kansas schools and communities have formed the recommendations and suggestions described throughout the manual.

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This guide was prepared by staff and consultants of the Kansas LEAN Program within the Bureau of Health Promotion, Kansas Department of Health and Environment. It is a part of the Department's ongoing commitment to promoting healthy behaviors and environmental changes that improve the quality of life for Kansans.

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